

side a classical approach, to data analysis: Dienes, for example, always quotes both Bayes factors and p values in his articles, allowing a role for both approaches. Several universities offer Bayes workshops, so now is an ideal time to benefit from Baguley's, Andrews' and others' extensive experience, and bring Bayes into your own research programme.

References

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- Baguley, T. (2012) Serious stats. *Serious stats: A guide to advanced statistics for the behavioral sciences*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dienes, Z. (2008) *Understanding psychology as a science: An introduction to scientific and statistical inference*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Not conferencing but hardy and rewarding public engagement: Unplugged at the Fringe with the Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas
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The idea is simple enough: An academic, a thought-provoking idea and an audience of Edinburgh Fringe Festival punters – all without the safety net of PowerPoint. It's a note-free, whites of their eyes, seat of your pants performance with contribution from a professional compere. How hard could it be?

The Beltane Network is an Edinburgh-based organisation supporting innovative public engagement from Scottish academics. Since 2013 they have run a season of one hour shows at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival called 'The Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas' (CoDI <http://codi.beltanenetwork.org/>). Responding to an annual call, researchers from anthropology to zoology sign up to relying only on home-made props and a spotlight to address an unknown and varied audience.

Those signed up are offered three half-day boot camps covering not falling over the microphone stand and the importance of breathing. We're also given the tried-and-

tested CoDI formula for shows. They should have about a ten-minute introduction setting up the idea and then should be mainly interactive – be that via demonstrations, Q&A, or something completely different. Oh and there is to be no technology involved so no chance of distracting the audience with shiny slideshows. It is academia unplugged.

In my show, 'Fitness to Witness' – given not one, but two slots – I explored eyewitness misidentification and miscarriages of justice. With my research interests focusing on face identification and facial composites, and most of my teaching having been forensically-focused, I figured this would be a relatively straightforward way to proceed.

When the evening arrived for my first show I was alternating between waves of terror and anxiety, and periods of calm acceptance. Once I got on the stage however I felt completely calm, and although things didn't pan out in the order I had planned, I was prepared for that as I knew I had to be flexible. I started my shows with a story, because everyone loves a story. By telling the story of the attack of Jennifer Thompson and the wrongful conviction of Ronald Cotton I could cover my main themes. I built in key points at which to ask the audience questions and give opportunities for questions.

With no idea who my audience would be, or how many their number, I decided to use handouts with facial composites of celebrities to get them talking. This usually works well with students, generating discussion and lots of laughter, which is no bad thing in my book. The audience were chatty, friendly and open, and there was lots of smiling and nodding (and not just from my very supportive family, friends and colleagues!). Importantly, they enjoyed themselves – which is great when they have given up a summer evening and paid almost a tenner to come and see you!

I had some great questions from the audience, and couldn't believe it when my hour was up. Many of them stopped to talk to me afterwards to ask further questions or to say how much they had enjoyed it. Although

I'd expected to feel relieved I actually felt butterflies of excitement that I'd get to do it all again in a few days. The second show was different – I think because the audience 'felt' different, but again it went really well. I got great feedback which was a nice boost, and as an academic I think we're often given the negative but not so much the positive. The vast majority of my audience were not from Scotland and did not work in universities. Most importantly, the end of show feedback survey indicated that 100 per cent from each show had learned something new.

There's no denying that the experience was terrifying, but very positive. I have long felt that public engagement is really important, and I think most HE employers now expect it as part of the job, but I have always found an excuse not to do it (mostly due to anxiety about it!). Although I was confident people would be interested in my topic, the format and audience forced me to think very

differently about how to communicate my ideas. It has made me think about alternative ways of communicating and engaging with students, and moving away from Powerpoint wherever I can.

I know I'm late to the party here and many of you will have been doing public engagement for years, but for those that haven't please give it a go! Communicating to a non-expert audience made me reflect on and interrogate my usual ways of communicating ideas, and I found that my audiences asked unanticipated and thought-provoking questions. I couldn't believe how much I had genuinely enjoyed it, and it's so rewarding when others find your research area as exciting as you do. I'm keeping an eye open for other opportunities to perform the show, or some version of it, and I'm already considering ideas for CoDI 2018.